

Introduction

- Trial before Felix...
 - context, wider sweep...

When lies are told

- Lies and half truths are told - notably v.6, desecrating the Temple
 - today we will be accused of things that are not true...
 - last year there was a series of attacks of Christian Unions in Universities on the basis of a misinterpretation of the "exclusive" membership (Christians only could be members)
- Responding with truth, not anger
 - Paul, rather than character assassination, responds with truth (v.12, 18, etc)
 - hear about the negative campaigning, "attacks ads", and the like from the American presidential campaign
 - and the trouble is they work!
 - but we are not to do such things - we are to be above reproach in how we speak to **and about** those we disagree with
- Publically this is important for Christian leaders - eg DECA, and please pray!
 - but it is also important in office, canteen or staffroom
 - how do we respond when someone makes an offhanded comment about Christians and we feel slighted?

When we need to take the chance to speak

- Issues of taking every opportunity:
 - couple of times in the passage
 - speaking with Drusilla, v.24
 - and speaking up not just on the charge against him but more widely bearing witness to Christ when before Felix v.14-15
- We too need to take the opportunities:
 - do we pray for those opportunities to arise?
 - do we ask God, each day, to help us **first see, and second take** those opportunities?
 - do we equip ourselves - **reading, Lost for Words course, memorising Scripture and general Bible study, etc** - so that we are ready with words, concepts, illustrations that the Spirit can draw out of us?

When integrity is needed

- The bribe v.26
 - are we the same in private as we are in public?
 - Friday Night Theology on trust, e-mail from October 2008

When patience is required

- Do we ever feel impatience that something will happen as we witness?
- Paul had to wait two years for the trial v.27
 - it won't always be this way, but there will certainly be times when we have to wait for God to act
 - there will be times when people come to faith quickly, when the gospel advances, when the Kingdom appears to pour in
 - but there will also be time when God says **be patient**
 - still need to be alert, taking the opporrunities, living with integrity and speaking truthfully...
 - but sometimes we will need to wait to see results

Conclusion

- We are witnesses (Acts 1:8) to Jesus Christ
 - the language there is of the law court - as was Paul's immediate context here
 - Paul needed to **speak with truth** as he bore witness
 - Paul needed to **speak up when the opportunity came** as he bore witness
 - Paul needed to **act with integrity** as he bore witness
 - Paul needed **patience** as he bore witness
- *We will need to demonstrate the same qualities, following Paul's example, as we too bear witness to Jesus Christ, whether in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, or to the ends of the earth."*